



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING Members of the Civil Military Operations Center meet with a country team during an exercise at JRTC. U.S. Army photo.

The Future of Interdependence: Conventional Forces Will Look More Like SOF; SOF Will Look More Like the CIA

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“While old-school socialism was an arm of the state, digital socialism is socialism without the state. This new brand of socialism currently operates in the realm of culture and economics, rather than government.”

— Kevin Kelly, *Wired Magazine*

The world social environment is changing through a myriad of revolutionary changes that are increasingly more prevalent and visible. These changes are primarily political in nature and are influenced through social media; a powerful shift in the control of information that has never been seen in any point in history. Many sociologists, such as Clay Shirky, Manuel Castells, Lee Rainie, Barry Wellman and Brian Solis, have compared these revolutionary changes to the industrial revolution, a significant change to society in the 18th and 19th centuries. Great historical and revolutionary shifts in societies have more often than not, caught militaries off guard while they were simultaneously moving through those changes only to figure out at a later date their significance.

This article will highlight some of these revolutionary changes to centralized power and how social media is a key aspect of it, and one that will need to be better embraced and exploited by the U.S. military in the future. Additionally, some of the decentralized revolutionary effects that are occurring in the world have led to the creation of Mission Command, a conceptual approach primarily based off of the autonomous successes of squad, platoon and companies operating in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹ However, to fully implement a Mission Command future, more is required, such as the development of new authorities to fully operate in a decentralized manner in countries where information and political power are decentralizing to large populations, as well as various nefarious groups and non-state ac-

tors who are operating in and among them. This future approach, through enhanced authorities, will be described in the context of interdependence not only between special operations forces and conventional forces, but joint and interagency as well. Both interdependent approaches must be strengthened to fully leverage each other effectively. Finally, the article will focus on what a decentralized military might look like if it were to enter into a country like Mexico. Mexico, an unstable, poverty-stricken country on the border, continues to pose major problems for the U.S., such as increased drug trafficking and the continuous flow of illegal immigration. If these situations continue to persist, the U.S. military could intervene in order to stabilize the U.S. Southern border.

The aforementioned sociologists have all compared the modern day networked society to the Industrial Revolution.² Those within the military community who understand the nature of war or revolutions in military affairs should take note when a comparison is made to the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution not only changed the structure of society but also the way the military was equipped, organized and prepared for war. Unfortunately, the realities of how the nature of war had changed through the realities of the Industrial revolution did not become apparent until World War I, which surprised many nations that were initially involved, specifically highlighting just how rapidly and markedly the face of war had changed. Its main contribution was the specific demonstration of just how



PREVENT AND SHAPE In the future, a traditional JCET like this one in the Philippines, may not be enough to disrupt a complex political awakening in numerous countries where power is shifting more to the people, and less from centralized government. U.S. Army photo.

lethal war had become through the use of the machine gun and explosive artillery.³ The failure to recognize the revolutionary changes that are occurring with the decentralized networked characteristics from states to their respective populations, and to iniquitous groups and non-state actors has the potential to visit a similar tragedy on military forces in the future.

There is no hierarchy within the Internet, nor are there any borders, and social media has a leaderless quality to its nature. The networked society is a combination of all digitized realities of society and how it communicates. The most recent major change in the application of digitized networked characteristics to everyday life is social media. In the past, communication was restricted to one-to-one through the use of the telegraph or the telephone. With the invention of radio and television, the capability grew to allow for the means of one-to-many types of communication that were typically controlled by centralized governments or powerful elites. Today, social media has taken all forms of digitized communication and allowed consumers to become information producers. These powerful communication and influential tools are now in the hands of the average citizen. Just as the Gutenberg Press changed reality for scribes, so too is social media changing the reality of the professional journalist, giving rise to the “citizen journalist”, blogging and posting at a rate, volume and reach never before possible. Social media tied to the networked society has decentralizing effects.⁴

There are many examples of how various nations are struggling with this decentralized nature of power. Some of these shifting realities are found in Moises Naim’s book, *The End of Power*. Naim describes the concept of “the state” as being “fractured”, when governments like “Mexico and Venezuela to Pakistan and the Philippines have lost control of swathes of national territory used by armed groups...” Ad-

ditionally, he describes the current changes to guerrilla warfare, where the age-old truth about popular support being critical to their success is now becoming less important, and the “increasingly borderless” guerrilla is becoming more important.⁵ The recent Boston Marathon terror attack is just one example of how decentralized, and borderless, these modern guerrillas without local popular support are becoming.⁶ Another example of decentralizing power has been highlighted in Zbigniew Brzezinski’s recent book, *Strategic Vision*, where he highlights the phenomenon of a globalized political awakening that is taking place. He describes it as, “...an interactive and interdependent world connected by visual communications and of the demographic youth bulge in the less advanced societies composed of the easy-to-mobilize and politically restless university students and the socially deprived unemployed.”⁶ Although Brzezinski highlights Central and Eastern Europe in his book, as well as the Arab world as examples for political awakenings, the U.S. has its own example with *Kony 2012*.

Kony 2012 is one example of a political awakening taking place through social media. *Kony 2012* is an online film that was created by Jason Russell through his non-government organization called Invisible Children, Inc. He created the social movement when he was frustrated by the war crimes committed by Joseph Kony, an African rebel leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda. Russell believed that the U.S. government was not doing enough to bring Kony to justice for his war crimes. Due to this perceived lack of effort on the part of the U.S. government, Russell created his own domestic and international movement to have Kony arrested. Russell was able to garner support generating donations to disrupt Kony’s operations.⁷ Although the movement had difficulty in getting support from the Internet to the streets of Uganda, the movement still showed the im-

pact social media has on political gain. The centralized, bureaucratic nature of industrialized, hierarchical governments, is being challenged by the decentralized nature of social media, and the empowerment of populations for political awareness and action.

Kony 2012, the 2006 Belarus protests and the Arab Spring uprisings of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya are all examples of how power is becoming more and more decentralized throughout the world.⁸ Add to these events the realities of the U.S. economic debt, the case could be made that more of these events will take place because the U.S. will be less effective in influencing centralized governments through the economic aspect of diplomatic, information, military and economic efforts. From a strategic standpoint, our inability to help other countries through various monetary aid will have an impact on our ability to influence certain decision makers around the world. With less of an impact through monetary support, those internal economic conditions that foster various forms of coercion, through certain political groups who are vying for political power, will more than likely increase. There could be certain, low-level situations, in which the U.S. military might find itself. When it does, it will be in a decentralized, Mission Command-type construct.

The philosophical concept of Mission Command is nebulous to some students at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. When asked to describe it, some field grade officers have responded that it is an idea taken from the German Staff during World War II, others have stated that it was created in order to deter the micromanaging toxic leader and Lt. Gen. David Perkins, commanding general of the Combined Arms Center, has said that the idea came from the autonomous successes of squad, platoon and companies operating in Afghanistan and Iraq. And yet, the idea can also be found in retired Gen. Stanley McCrystal's "decentralized decision-making" concept for attacking a decentralized network where "you have to allow your subordinate elements to operate very quickly."⁹ In ADP 6-0 *Mission Command* is described as "disciplined initiative...to empower agile and adaptive leaders" to conduct operations that "...defy orderly, efficient and precise control."¹⁰ Mission Command creates the necessary, decentralized, regionally aligned thinking force that can meet the decentralized future. However, there are some radical changes to Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership, Personnel and Facilities that must be made in order to fully execute a Mission Command-type of military that can leverage conventional forces and special operations forces through interdependence, and also leverage other interagencies.

When Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom wrote *The Starfish and the Spider*, it sparked the interest of the U.S. Army, specifically Gen. Martin Dempsey who was then the commander of TRADOC.¹¹ Currently, some leadership implementation of a "Starfish" approach to greater adaptability is taking place at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Select majors are chosen for a two week course on how to foster a positive, trusted network where the free-flow of ideas takes place. Retired Colonels Gregory Fontenot, Mark Monroe and Steven Rotkoff describe the idea of a thinking Army that produces "people within organizations capable of developing useful ideas within the context of a trusted network underwritten and supported within a successful and adaptive hierarchy such as the Army."¹² However, is the Army an adaptive hierarchy that can change to meet the future of a decentralized world? Change is hard to do, especially when most of the Army force is conventional by nature, thinking within a land-domain

construct where "overwhelming force" is the over arching objective. Throw in the political realities of selfish ambition, and the multifarious special interest, "military industrial complex" groups, the realities needed for change become that much more convoluted. We need to change the rules, the legislative, Title authorities, to allow more applicable change within doctrine. The current Title 10 rules for war are very restrictive to creative thinking for the future demands that the U.S. Army will more than likely face. No matter how adaptive we may become, we still have legal restrictions placed over us that force us to be less creative. That is a paradigm that needs to be modified within reason, calculating necessary risks, and only a strong narrative at the strategic level can do it. In the meantime more interdependence training will be needed in the future.

Maj. Gen. Bennet Sacolick and Brig. Gen. Wayne Gribbsby Jr. were accurate when they said, "The scope and scale of challenges anticipated in the future security environment demand the institutionalization of interdependence."¹³ This idea of SOF/CF interdependence was executed during the October 2012 Joint Readiness Training Center rotation where an 82nd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and a SOF Operational Detachment Bravo executed an exercise exploiting each other's capabilities to achieve optimal results. Essentially the exercise scenario was designed around a normal, shaping type of joint combined exchange training event, which then morphed into an unconventional warfare setting. This JRTC rotation is definitely something to build upon for future interdependence of SOF and CF operations. However, the future will more than likely be more joint, more interagency and more than likely more unconventional, which the Army is just not ready for. More interdependence training leveraging not only Army SOF and CF, but other services and interagencies is needed as well.

If the future is going to look more unconventional than the rules to conduct UW may be too restrictive. The SF Qualification Course does an excellent job at preparing SOF for UW. However, it is extremely rare that SOF has ever executed a true Phase 0 UW type of mission. In many cases, relationships were already established by the CIA. For instance when SOF linked up with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan in 2002, relationships were already established by the CIA, and Task Force Viking in Iraq in 2003, where relationships with the Kurds were already established by the CIA again. In both cases, these operations were also followed by substantial stability, or nation building missions.¹⁴ True UW operations are not necessarily followed by overt types of missions, they may not need to be if they are effective in the first place. Although we can tie UW with a JCET, which falls in line with shaping and prevention, there may be opportunities to think around them and become more involved.

"Prevent, shape, win" is a novel concept. The reality of only executing JCS exercises, and JCETs will more than likely not be enough to disrupt a complex political awakening in numerous countries where power is shifting more to the people, and less from centralized governments. If this happens, and there are many cases where it has, it is not too farfetched that the use of proxies, surrogates and "occupying powers" may become more the norm. Case in point, on Feb. 12, 2013, Lt. Gen. George Flynn, the Director of the Joint Staff J7, came to the CGSC to give a brief on the Joint Force 2020. In the brief he highlighted the state use of surrogates and proxies as emerging threats. Cold War types of realities are at the forefront again. Yet, to meet these realities some serious considerations need to be taken in order to be

more flexible, and more adaptable to do it. Some of these include not only changing our doctrine, but the rules which restrict us as well.

When the Office of Strategic Services was created in World War II, it was an Army directed entity conducting espionage, and covert operations. However, after World War II, the OSS became the modern day CIA which is less Army, and more civilian authority dominated with Presidential and U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee oversight. It has become the de facto covert, UW type of go-to organization. The U.S. government has created a reality where the CIA will do practically all of the legwork when it comes to dealing with surrogates or proxies in countries X, Y and Z in a covert type of setting. Title 50 gives the CIA not only the authority to do UW, but it also provides them with the freedom to think, and be as creative as they need to be in order to be successful before and while in a UW setting. Creating a new strategic narrative for changing Title 10, and relooking the U.S. Special Operation Command's definition of UW are the type of approaches that are needed in order to properly meet the future demands of warfare.

In Col.(R) David Maxwell's paper, "Why does Special Operations Train and Educate for Unconventional War", he brings up some very valid points about the definition of UW. He specifically hones in on the words "occupying force." Maxwell states, "While this narrowly describes traditional state-on-state military conflict with one state occupying another with its military, this does not adequately describe the reality of the 21st Century. Today there are 'occupying powers' that take on state like characteristics and responsibilities...such as Hezbollah and Hamas or the FARC."¹⁵ Some senior level consideration needs to take place in order to update our current definitions, our doctrine, and more importantly Title 10 in order to properly meet the current and emerging threats of surrogates, proxies and other modern day "occupying powers" who are hostile to existing governments and U.S. strategic interests. If these changes are eventually made, there are certain situations for which the U.S. military and interagencies could find themselves working together through interdependence. One of these situations could be with the ongoing issues that have plagued Mexico. There are some potential unique possibilities that could come to fruition.

One of the realities of the U.S. having incurred \$17 trillion dollars in debt, is that it will more than likely restrict some of its force projection overseas. The U.S. will have to focus more internally to those strategic interests that are closer to home, for example with Mexico, where you have a near failed state reality on the border. Even though the previous Mexican President, Felipe Calderon, deflected any idea that Mexico was a failed state, the country still has some relevant issues that are typical of failed states.¹⁶ Some of these include massive corruption within its government structure to include its security forces, drug cartels trying to establish a state within a state, uncontrolled violence, rampant poverty, a deflating economy, weak educational infrastructure, human trafficking and refugees in the form of illegal immigrants fleeing to the U.S. To put the Mexico realities into greater context, Carlos Spector, an El Paso lawyer who has handled 200 requests for U.S. asylum from Mexican citizens has stated, "This will go down as the worst human rights and humanitarian crisis in Latin America since the dirty wars of Chile and Argentina in the 1970s,...It is also the worst violence the country has seen since the 1910 Mexican Revolution."¹⁷ Currently the U.S. is involved in Mexico trying to aid the Mexican government to disrupt and contain some of these issues but the issues continue to

escalate.¹⁸ Some U.S. military options could be called upon in order to get a better handle on stabilizing some the prevalent problems.

With a revamped Title 10 interdependent of the realities of Title 50, the U.S. Military will be in a better position for dealing with surrogates, proxies, gangs and various drug cartels in Mexico. The U.S. civil authorities could leverage SOF working through a myriad of hybrid interdependence realities with other interagencies in a UW type of setting. These activities would be the initial stages of Phase 0, linking up with Mexican organizations that are anti-drug cartels that are undermining the weak Mexican government and trying to establish their own state within a state. The networking efforts of SOF with host-nation, indigenous anti-drug groups could look similar to John Arquilla's concept found in the article "The New Rules of War", where he described "200 Special Forces 'horse soldiers' who beat the Taliban and al Qaeda."¹⁹ Another example is found in the concept of "Light Footprints" where Major Fernando Lujan describes 50 to 100 personnel being effective in Yemen, Libya and Uganda.²⁰ The age old paradigm of "more is better" will not fit well in a country like Mexico where less will be much better in terms of being cheaper, leaner, smarter and networked to achieve more.²¹

Initially these auxiliary groups will be formed through initial face-to-face type of settings followed by other means such as through various social media tools. These tools will be predominately through the use of cell phones but enhanced through government covert apps that will be similar to the social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Blogger.²² These tools will serve in a dual effort communication role such as strengthening the various groups will to fight through virtual communication, and will also offer various means of disruption through cyber and physical mobilization. The use of various IP addresses and digital code for communications will enhance OPSEC during all operations from internal and external detection. As these UW realities are taking place, other interdependent type of options may become more available and needed. Some of these could be the use of a hybrid, Joint type of Brigade Combat Team.

Much has been said in the Capstone Concept with regards to joint operations and its relevance to future operations. However, there are some flaws within the joint arena, especially with training and organization. In the recent article by Col. Thomas Boccardi, "Meritocracy in the Profession of Arms", he highlights statistics that point to the fact that less than 1 percent of maneuver majors and 5 percent of maneuver lieutenant colonels have served on Joint Staffs.²³ Additionally, you rarely if ever see any type of joint exercise being played out at the Combat Training Centers. Typically these training centers are focused on the BCT level incorporating various scenarios of force-on-force, stability operations and some guerrilla warfare. However, they could also be a better venue for a J-BCT exercise which could be played out in a real world type of exercise dealing with the realities of Mexico.

After well established UW SOF efforts have transpired over time, a small, but highly interconnected J-BCT, augmented with cyber, a battalion mixed with select companies of U.S. Soldiers, and companies of Marines, a UAV squadron and even an A-10 squadron could come in to provide greater stability. These efforts could range from disrupting the drug cartels ability to communicate, reinvigorating Mexican security forces by eliminating corruption, a myriad of unmanned aerial vehicles for ISR/Surgical strike options, A-10 show of force operations and other mitigating efforts to stop the flow of il-



SOF ROOTS A member of the OSS Detachment 101 embedded with a tribal group in Burma in the 1940s that planned and carried out espionage operations specifically to collect both strategic and tactical information, but intelligence was also a by-product of all its other operations including guerrilla actions, sabotage and psychological measures. U.S. Army photo.

legal refugees into the U.S. All of these efforts will be interlinked, and networked through interdependence among all of the various forces from SOF to the J-BCT, to various interagencies. Through enhanced training that aids in mitigating normal inter-service rivalries, inter-branch rivalries and interagency rivalries, more can be effectively accomplished with less under extreme budgetary constraints.

In conclusion, the future will be more interdependent amongst all services and agencies, within a whole-of-government approach to conflicts. These conflicts will more than likely be of the UW persuasion. Pushing this UW construct is the decentralization of power from centralized governments to their respective populaces, and is tied to the interconnectedness of the networked society through the power of social media tools. These tools are inherently decentralized in their nature. With a power shift moving to the people, there is great potential for those non-state actors rising to the occasion to disrupt not only internal countries for which they reside, but internationally as well. To better counter this, a greater interdependence effort will be needed. This will need to come from a new narrative that takes a critical look at our existing laws and policies that govern our approach to war. A start would be a revamped definition of UW as it applies to today's realities. Another look would be Title 10 as it applies to covert, modern-day operations in countries X, Y and Z. Additionally, better training through interdependence will be needed among the sister services in a J-BCT type of construct, and with better integration with other interagencies. Finally, due to extreme budgetary constraints, a hard international look will need to take place to figure out where we can effectively deal with strategic issues. Some of these may be regulated closer to home, as with Mexico.

Envisioning the future is hard to do. Even the great Gen. (R) Gordon Sullivan, instrumental to creating the modern day "all-volunteer Army", had trouble doing it. His concern over a \$1 trillion foreign debt prior to 1995 fails by comparison to what we face today.²⁴ The

best way to manage it will be through greater interdependence amongst all concerned with security, internally and externally. A future where CF will look more like SOF, and SOF will look more like the CIA, the OSS of old. **SW**

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INTERDEPENDENCE Conventional and special operations soldiers conduct a concept brief at JRTC. Joint rotations at JRTC allow the units to exploit each other's capabilities to achieve optimal results in an unconventional warfare setting. U.S. Army photo.

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